Provincial Strategy for Gaelic Launched

Tourism, Culture and Heritage

News Releases

May 31, 2004 10:39 AM

A strategy to preserve and advance Nova Scotia's Gaelic heritage was released today, May 31, at Rankin Memorial High School in Iona.

Tourism, Culture and Heritage Minister Rodney MacDonald joined the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, representatives from the province's Gaelic community and the Scottish organization, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, to officially release Leasachadh agus Gléidheadh na Gàidhlig an Albainn Nuaidh (Developing and Preserving Gaelic in Nova Scotia: A Strategy for Community Based Initiatives).

"This strategy is a 20-year vision for Gaelic in Nova Scotia," said Mr. MacDonald. "It is a statement of how the Gaelic language and culture has survived in Nova Scotia. It is a plan to ensure the survival and growth of Gaelic in this province."

Mr. MacDonald also announced today that the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage will contribute $100,000 over the next year to enhance economic growth within the Gaelic community and to develop a five-year business and implementation plan for the Gaelic strategy.

The Gaelic strategy is the result of three years of co-operative development by the Gaelic Development Steering Committee and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. It reflects widespread community input, mostly gathered at forums held throughout the province in November 2002.

The strategy is a detailed plan that acknowledges the valuable contribution that Gaelic language and culture makes to Nova Scotian society, as well as its economic impact. The strategy summarizes the current situation, sets a framework for advancement and identifies the role of the provincial government as a critical partner in the process of revitalizing the Gaelic language and culture and expanding the Gaelic economy.

"It is no secret that the language is in a perilous state, but it is much more than just words that are being lost," said Hector MacNeil, chair of the Gaelic Development Steering Committee. "Linguistic research shows there is a tendency for economic decline in areas that undergo language repression and loss. It is our intention that, with the realization of the objectives outlined in this strategy document, we will see a revitalized Gaelic community. In this way, all Nova Scotians will continue to benefit from the Gaelic presence in this province."

The Gaelic strategy identifies six key areas of development: leadership and empowerment; language education; arts and culture; community initiatives; media and promotion; government and legal status. The Gaelic Council, with the continued co-operation of community and government, will build a series of five-year action plans around each of these topics. The first drafts of these plans will be presented at community forums in November 2004.

Rankin Memorial High School student Emily Redden thanked the Gaelic Development Steering Committee members for their initiative and perseverance, as well as the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, and asked that the work begin with Cape Breton's youth in mind.

"Gaelic is the language of our heritage, tradition, family and community history," said Ms. Redden. "If Gaelic is lost to future generations, so will the continuity of knowledge that informs us on who we are and where we've been. We will become cultural orphans."

International language issues expert Rob Dunbar arrived from Scotland to attend the event. Mr. Dunbar, who is widely published and is a senior non-resident research associate of the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg, Germany, represented Bòrd na Gàidhlig -- a non-departmental public body established by the Scottish Executive to oversee Gaelic development in Scotland. He conveyed the organization's congratulations and noted that Nova Scotia's Gaelic culture is a unique, precious and irreplaceable resource that, in addition to its role at home, has great importance to Scottish Gaels and to Scotland in general.

Leasachadh agus Gléidheadh na Gàidhlig an Albainn Nuaidh (Developing and Preserving Gaelic in Nova Scotia: A Strategy for Community Based Initiatives) is available on the website at **www.gov.ns.ca/dtc/culture/culture_gaelic.asp** . For more information, contact the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, P.O. Box 51011, RPO Rockingham Ridge, Halifax, N.S., B3M 4R8.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

A strategy to preserve and advance Nova Scotia's Gaelic heritage was released today (May 31st) in Iona.

Tourism, Culture and Heritage Minister Rodney MacDonald joined representatives of the province's Gaelic community to officially release the strategy, titled "Developing and Preserving Gaelic in Nova Scotia: A Strategy for Community Based Initiatives."

The strategy is a detailed plan that acknowledges the valuable contribution that Gaelic language and culture makes to Nova Scotian society, as well as its economic impact.

The Gaelic strategy identifies six key areas of development, around which the Gaelic Council, with the continued co-operation of community and government, will build a series of five-year action plans.

The Gaelic strategy is the result of three years of development between the Gaelic Development Steering Committee and the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

-30-

Contact: Jenna MacNeil
Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia
902-539-8046
E-mail: jennamacneil@syd.eastlink.ca

jal May 31, 2004 10:39 A.M.

Crown copyright © 2008, Province of Nova Scotia, all rights reserved.
Page last updated 2008-06-27.
Come to life - Discover Nova Scotia